

**Design Review Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Monday, April 19, 2021**  
**Council Chambers @ 4:00pm**  
**1700 N. Grand Avenue, Las Vegas, New Mexico**

**Call to Order**

Chairman Garcia called the meeting to order at 4:00m. Chairman Garcia asked everyone to join in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance and asked Mr. Tafoya to lead them. Chairman Garcia asked for a Roll call.

**Roll Call**

Members Present

Rick Rubio  
Jose Gallegos  
Harold Garcia  
Ray Tafoya  
Isaac Sandoval

Members Absent

Roland Medrano

Chairman Garcia stated to let the record show that we do have a quorum.

**City Staff Present**

Ben Maynes, Bldg. Code Supervisor  
Maria Perea, Planning & Zoning Coordinator  
Councilor Michael Montoya  
Councilor David Romero

**Approval of Agenda**

Chairman Garcia then asked for approval of the Agenda and asked if there were any questions or comments on the Agenda. Chairman Garcia stated that hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve the Agenda as submitted. Mr. Tafoya made a motion to approve the Agenda as submitted, motion seconded by Mr. Gallegos. Chairman Garcia asked that all in favor signify by saying "Aye". All said "Aye". Chairman Garcia asked all opposed same sign, none opposed. Chairman Garcia stated that we have an approved agenda.

**Approval of Minutes**

Chairman Garcia stated that next on the agenda was approval of the minutes for the February 23, 2021 meeting and asked if there were any questions or comments on the minutes. None of the Board members comments and Chairman Garcia stated that he did have a question on the minutes to staff. Chairman Garcia stated that minutes were not verbatim based on what the meeting was about. He stated that they were cut quite a bit and he was curious as to why this happened. Ms. Maria Perea stated that Mr. Maynes could answer that question.

Mr. Maynes stated, Mr. Chairman, the minutes were not cut, they were just streamlined to show only what did take place similarly to what any other minutes would show, instead of doing everything that went on. We did follow the guidelines for minute taking with our Director, Mr. Bill Hendrickson and he stated to just write down what actions that did take place, and that all that other jargon did not need to be in there. We left the meat and potatoes in.

Chairman Garcia stated that before he asked for a motion to approve the minutes, he wanted to make a statement to staff. He stated that he understood since the meeting of February 23 there has been some discussion within the City on the possibility of removing and replacing the Design Review Board. Chairman Garcia stated that he had heard comments that the Board was not qualified, that it may have been a political decision or political recommendation. He continued that he wanted to stress that regardless of the situation, the Board was recently

appointed. He stated that he would encourage that anytime that something like this is looked into, once it has been acted on the way it was acted on for this board, that the City look at this closely. It is a bit embarrassing to hear from the public, to receive calls from the public that there are rumors that Mayor and Council are going to replace you because you are not qualified. He is letting each Board member to speak for themselves if they wish to. He stated that he is speaking on behalf of himself and the board. He stated that the Board is committed to doing what we are asked to do or what we are required to do as the Design Review Board. It is a volunteer effort on our part and the gentlemen who are here have been here for longer than two years. I have never seen where it is a political situation with the Board the way it has been construed to be over the past few weeks. Also, in all fairness to the Board, it would have been nice to get a phone call or get an email saying that there is some consideration going on for removing and replacing you, but none of that was said. He stated that he did know it was on the agenda as he saw the agenda himself. Otherwise, he would not have known about this. If the decision continues that they want to remove and replace us, he is okay with that. He is a volunteer, he is a community resident, and he is dedicated to this community, he is not here because it is a political appointment. He was asked to be on this board because of my experience in issues with regards to buildings within the community. He stated that he knew that because I was asked by a previous Mayor to be on the Board. He continued that he was reappointed by this Mayor. He was not asked to be reappointed, but when he found out he was reappointed he was honored that he was. As a result, we had a meeting last month that obviously lit fireworks within City Council, the Mayor and within the City that was a bit intimidating to the City based on the decision that was made by the board. He further stated that he stood by the issue that was made on February 23 by the Board to table the issue rather than saying yes or no to the project. He stated that if there were any questions on it, he would rather have the question be asked of him as the Chairman of the board. He stated that he can speak on behalf of the board regarding that. He stated that he felt that the choice that was made of tabling the issue was the best choice for the applicant themselves, not necessarily for the City, but for the applicant. If the Board had denied the application or we had not approved it, then the process would have changed. By the board tabling it, it did not change the process. The applicant still has the option of having their application approved. There is also a strong chance of it not being approved, but at a minimum they have a chance of it being approved. If the board had denied it, they would not have a chance to have it approved before the Design Review Board. Chairman Garcia stated that he just wanted it to go on record and he hoped that this statement is in the minutes so that it is reflected in an appropriate fashion for future reference to the project that was here on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February. He then asked if there were any questions or comments from the board at this time. Chairman Garcia gave the floor to Mr. Rubio.

Mr. Rubio stated that as far as stating that this board is not qualified, he disagrees with that. We have two members who live and work in the historical district, we have another business owner over here and we have Mr. Joe here who is also a distinguished person and capable of making qualified decisions and Harold who is also very qualified to make decisions. If they are saying we are not qualified, he disagrees with that.

Chairman Garcia asked if there was anyone else that wanted to say something. Mr. Sandoval stated he wanted to say something, and Chairman Garcia gave him the floor.

Mr. Sandoval stated that firstly he would like to apologize again for the ill-choice of words that he used towards the applicant at that time. He stated that he still did not think it was a COVID matter and he is glad that they paused everything. He stated that this was his first meeting, and he really did not understand what the limitations of passing or approving this sort of thing was. After talking with people, he thinks that the boards' role in that is minimal versus like everything else that they have to do with the City for a project on that scale. Mr. Sandoval stated that he did not want to be involved in a situation like that again. I also do not want to be involved with things that happened after the fact, such as people calling me and saying that City Council members were assuring the applicant that they would take him off the board as he was not qualified. He stated that he does have an MMFA, which is a terminal degree in fine arts, which is representative of what they are trying to do here in this area. He has run his own business for six years, aside from his own father's business. He has also remodeled and has continued a remodel of a 100-year-old historic building near the downtown district. He continued that he did not appreciate the aftermath of everything that he experienced in the last month, as he has nothing to gain here. He honestly felt that it hindered a lot of situations in his own life, business and personal. It really caused a lot of chaos. He further stated that if they wanted him out to let him know and he could resign. He continued that he

was sorry for his words and that he wants to be in here help people as he knows how difficult to pass things. He stated that if it gets into something like that again, it is not worth it for him and he apologized again for just jumping in there and stating his opinion. He stated that he did not think it was all his words, but there was a lot of it that sparked the situation. He stated that he took responsibility for this. He asked for a little bit of guidance for this board if they decide to keep up or whatever. I just want to be able to say yes or no to a green color of paint or purple and not have to deal with something as detrimental as 40 years of history or 100 years of history. He stated that he looked into it and the last time they changed anything in the Plaza was about 4 years ago.

Chairman Garcia asked if there was anyone else that wanted to say something. Mr. Gallegos said he wanted to say something. Chairman Garcia gave the floor to Mr. Gallegos.

Mr. Gallegos stated that as both have already stated, we got phone calls from people here in Las Vegas. We are here to serve this board, to help. We are not here to play politics. He stated that he did not play politics. He stated he has been in politics, but he does not play them and them telling us that because we did not approve the Plaza Hotel thing that they are kicking us out. People were calling us all day long on Tuesday before the meeting on Wednesday. We are here to serve this board. He stated that he when was called to be put back on the board, he accepted it because he has really enjoyed this, but he does not play politics. Whomever is doing it, I do not know if it is the Mayor or if it is the Council, but he does not play politics, he is there to serve Las Vegas as he has been here for 53 years.

Chairman Garcia gave the floor to Mr. Sandoval again.

Mr. Sandoval stated that he had someone call him and tell him to be careful because you do not know who you are dealing with politically. He stated that all he wanted to do was make tacos, I do not need all this stuff. This was someone very associated with the applicant. They warned me to be careful with the decisions that you make and the people that you mess with over there. He stated that he supported Allan, he supports any growth in Las Vegas within reason. He stated that a good idea was a good idea, business is business for Vegas. He stated that he does not want to get into something that is bad for his business. He stated that he did not appreciate getting calls like that from members of the community who maybe have a different opinion than him.

Chairman Garcia continued with the meeting and asked for a motion to approve the minutes of February 23, 2021. Motion to approve minutes was made by motion Mr. Sandoval, motion was seconded by Mr. Gallegos. Chairman Garcia asked that all in favor signify by saying "Aye". All said "Aye". Chairman Garcia asked all opposed same sign, none opposed. Chairman Garcia stated that we have approved minutes for February 23, 2021.

### **Old Business**

Item #1: Continuation of tabled item - Review and approval of the new By Laws and Rules of Procedure for the Design Review Board. Chairman Garcia stated that he was the one that asked that this item be tabled. The reason that he asked for this item to be tabled was because he had a question on whether the chairman had the right to vote within the items that are presented. He stated that he was informed a few minutes ago by Ms. Perea that the Chairman does have the right to vote. He further stated that was the only question he had, other than that he had no problem with the by-laws. He asked if anybody else has any questions or comments and opened the floor for that. He asked if there was any discussion from the board. He then asked for a motion to approve the by-laws presented to us. Chairman Garcia made the motion to approve the by-laws as presented, motion seconded by Mr. Gallegos. Chairman Garcia asked that all in favor signify by saying "Aye". All said "Aye". Chairman Garcia asked all opposed same sign, none opposed. Chairman Garcia stated that we have approved by-laws.

Mr. Maynes stated that typically on the Robert's Rules of Order you would get the motion, then get the second, then it is discussion then it is the vote. He stated that the discussion was done before the motions. He stated that he was with the Zoning League and that he was President of the Zoning League back in 2012. He stated that this is a big organization with the New Mexico Municipal League, the Zoning Officials and he wants to share with all board members of the DRB. He continued by thanking them for all they do for the City, thanked Mr. Garcia for

stepping up to the plate with the chairmanship. One thing that is particularly important is that through the Zoning League there is training available and once this COVID crisis is over, he will invite all of them to get training. He stated that it is a three-day course and trainings are all over the state. He advised the board to take their time, to read their rules and stated that it takes time to be where you are at and that he knows a couple of veterans here that know how the program works. He stated that revamping, reshaping, and learning is all part of doing what you do. He continued that it is an important role that you do have, and you do have a lot of responsibilities. Words do matter and we all know that you are qualified in that you were appointed to this board, so put that behind you. Look forward, but at the same time, there is a lot of reading to do when you get your packets. You need to read and understand what is coming up. He advised the board that being prepared is important.

Chairman Garcia stated that he was going back to Item #1 under old business and asked if he could have a motion to take the tabled item of the by-laws out of tabled and bringing it before the board today for action. Chairman Garcia made a motion to take the tabled item of the by-laws out of tabled and bringing it before the board today for action, motion seconded by Mr. Tafoya. Chairman Garcia asked that all in favor signify by saying "Aye". All said "Aye". Chairman Garcia asked all opposed same sign, none opposed. Motion carries.

Chairman Garcia asked if there was any discussion on the item itself. Chairman Garcia stated that he wanted to discuss the item and that he was the one that asked that this item be tabled. The reason that he asked for this item to be tabled was because he had a question on whether he, as chairman had the right to vote. He stated that he was informed by Ms. Perea a few minutes ago that he does have the right to vote. With that he does not have any other discussion on the item and that he accepted the by-laws and asked if there was further discussion on the issue or if anybody had any questions or comments. No further discussion, questions or comments were brought forth. Chairman Garcia asked for a motion to approve the by-laws. Chairman Garcia made the motion to approve the by-laws as presented, motion seconded by Mr. Tafoya. Chairman Garcia asked that all in favor signify by saying "Aye". All said "Aye". Chairman Garcia asked all opposed same sign, none opposed. Chairman Garcia stated that we have approved by-laws.

### **New Business**

Item #1: Application for Certificate of Approval as submitted by Vincent Mathias (Applicant) and Michael Monroe (Owner) for a sign for business at 210 Plaza Street. Chairman Garcia asked if any of the gentlemen were here today. Applicant stated that he was present. Chairman Garcia asked applicant to step forward and state his name for the record.

Mr. Vincent Mathias came up to do presentation. He thanked Chairman Garcia and the DRB for the opportunity to be here today. Chairman Garcia swore in Mr. Mathias prior to him doing his presentation.

Mr. Mathias stated that he had just opened a law office here in our community. He stated that he was with the Prosecutors Office in the 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District for about 2½ years. He stated it was time to step out on his own and that he is excited at being part of the community. He stated that his wife was born and raised in Las Vegas, she brought him here and he is happy and proud to be part of the community. He continued that he just opened a small law firm at 210 Plaza Street. We are going to keep the sign very particular to the area of Plaza Street. He stated he was between the Adrian Herrera Farmers Insurance and the Christian Gift Store. He stated that he is keeping a very traditional sign. He wants it to look very traditional, old school law offices like we used to see years ago. He spoke about the large number of small businesses in the State of New Mexico and nationally and continued by stating numbers. He stated that small business is what supports our economy. He again stated that he was proud to be a member of the community, proud to open a law office to hopefully help the community. He stated that they have been busy since the day they opened, and he hoped the sign would create more exposure. He spoke about the type of law he practices.

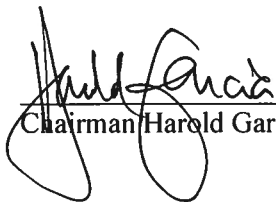
Chairman Garcia asked if there were any questions from the board. He stated that dimensions of the sign and is like what is going to be replaced. It is the same layout with just a change of name. He stated that he did not see a problem with that. He asked if there were any questions or comments from the board. Mr. Tafoya stated it was rather good, very straight forward, that it was right up against the wall. Chairman Garcia asked for a motion to

approve the application for certificate of Approval for a sign. Mr. Tafoya made the motion to approve the application as presented, motion seconded by Mr. Gallegos. Chairman Garcia asked that all in favor signify by saying "Aye". All said "Aye". Chairman Garcia asked all opposed same sign, none opposed. Chairman Garcia stated that the motion carries.

Chairman Garcia asked if there was any other business from the staff that they would like to discuss before he asks for adjournment. None was brought up.

### **Adjournment**

Chairman Garcia asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Rubio made the motion to adjourn, motion seconded by Mr. Sandoval. Chairman Garcia asked that all in favor signify by saying "Aye". All said "Aye". Chairman Garcia asked all opposed same sign, none opposed. Chairman Garcia stated to let the record reflect that the meeting was adjourned at 4:25pm.

  
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Chairman/Harold Garcia

9/17/21  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date